DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 102 482 CG 009 583

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TITLE Make Your Choice: A Careers Simulation.
PUB DATE [74]
NOTE 20p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS *Career Planning; *Case Studies; Guidance Programs; *Occupational Guidance; Pamphlets; *Role Playing; Secondary Education; Secondary School Students; *Simulation
IDENTIFIERS *Scotland

ABSTRACT

This simulation is designed for use of guidance teachers as part of a Careers Education program. Although basically dealing with a careers situation, other aspects of guidance emerge--confidentiality, parental problems, writing of references. It is interesting to consider these aspects from the pupils' point of view. The simulation can be used with pupils of different ranges of ability. The pace of working and the discussion level will, of course, vary. Used for one period per week this exercise could occupy one term of a third or fourth year guidance social education program. "Make Your Choice," revolves around four young people who apply for a post in an outdoor center. In due course they are interviewed by a panel--preferably three willing members of staff. The whole group participate throughout: in writing for application forms; in composing references from the scanty information; and in discussion. Ten discussion areas are indicated linked to the simulation material. Because of the open nature of the discussion no fixed structure is offered. (Author)

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'Make Your Choice'

A Careers Simulation

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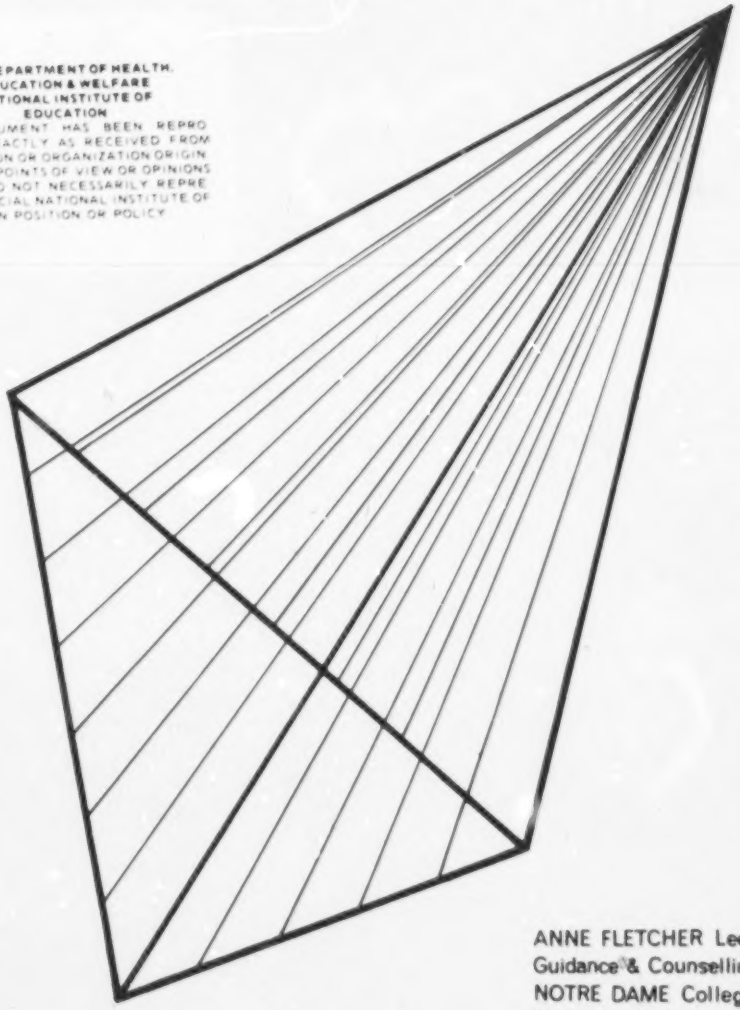

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CG 009 583

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Introduction

Guidance and counselling deal basically with feelings, hopes and expectations, fears and anxieties; with relationships, attitudes, decision-making, and behaviour patterns.

Learning by doing is essential in these complex and not easily defined areas. An effective way of promoting this is by the use of case-studies, role play, games and simulations. These usually are carried out in a group. This in itself is good training experience in group loyalty and decision-making; and encourages an awareness of personalities and feelings.

A case study is a static description of a situation. It is useful in provoking discussion in a group. For example, a 3rd year group even of high ability, may not contribute much to a discussion on the topic "Teenage Drinking." Give them a story of Jimmy and his friends going to the disco and trying to smuggle in some drink and they'll talk about the situation much more readily. Even though some of them may identify with Jimmy, the discussion does not seem to be personal to them but to refer only to Jimmy.

A simulation is a dynamic presentation of a case study. It involves the pupils directly as they assume the identities of the characters in the situation. They can thus learn how it feels to be in this situation, and how difficult it is to make decisions. They become aware of other people's feelings, difficulties and viewpoints. The group observing the simulation participate too, discussing what has been done and what might have been done. A follow-up session is essential when further reflection, discussion and interpretation can take place. Role-play, i.e. the acting out, in an impromptu and unstructured way, of a set situation, has always the advantage of spontaneity. This can bring with it true insights into the situation not only for those playing the roles but for the observers. Not all pupils or students want to try playing a role, feeling they have no talent in this direction - no acting ability. However for the role-play, as used to illustrate a situation and stimulate discussion about certain attitudes, no dramatic talents are needed.

Games introduce a competitive element into a situation. In many subjects - geography, modern studies, business management and organisation - the playing of games not only arouses interest in the subject but encourages the assimilation of facts.

All these devices aim to help us learn about human reactions, interactions and emotions.

This simulation is designed for use of guidance teachers as part of a Careers Education programme. Although basically dealing with a careers situation, other aspects of guidance emerge - confidentiality, parental problems, writing of references etc. It is interesting to consider these aspects from the pupils' point of view. No two groups of pupils will react in the same way.

The simulation can be used with pupils of different ranges of ability. The pace of working and the discussion level will, of course, vary. Used for one period per week this exercise could occupy one term of a 3rd or 4th year Guidance/Social Education programme.

In response to requests to present the material in printed form I have omitted many of the teaching points which will arise and which teachers from their own experience and with knowledge of their own pupils are highly competent to develop in their own way.

"MAKE YOUR CHOICE" revolves around four young people who apply for a post in an Outdoor Centre. In due course they are interviewed by a panel - preferably three willing members of staff. The whole group participate throughout: in writing for application forms; in composing references from the scanty information supplied; and in discussion.

Ten discussion areas are indicated linked to the simulation material. Because of the open nature of the discussions no fixed structure is offered.

MATERIAL FOR SIMULATION

A. ADVERTISEMENT FOR POST IN CRAIGEND OUTDOOR CENTRE.

B. APPLICATION FORM (SIMPLIFIED).

C. FOUR "NOTES FOR REFEREES."

D. PERSONAL PROFILES FOR PETER, JIMMY, ALAN AND MARY.

E. PERSONAL PROFILES OF INTERVIEWING PANEL.

(A)

CRAIGEND OUTDOOR CENTRE

This centre is run by Strathmill Education Authority.

It provides courses in sailing, canoeing, hill walking, mountaineering, orienteering and pony trekking. These courses are open to schools in the area.

In vacation time and at week-ends, courses are available for young adults.

A vacancy exists for a junior assistant. The person appointed should be 16 years or over, interested in outdoor activities with personal experience of some of the activities mentioned. The post is a residential one.

Training for Instructors' Certificate will be given.

This is an excellent opening for a young person interested in the work of Outdoor Centres.

Application forms from:

Mr. A.P. Brown,
Warden,
Craigend Outdoor Centre,
Strathmill.

B

Name	
Address	
Age School (s) Attended	
Certificates Gained	
Give details of Further Education (if any)	
Give details of positions of responsibility held in school	
Give details of Clubs etc. to which you belonged.	
Give full details of hobbies and interests	
Names of two referees. (One should be your Guidance Teacher.)	

(C) Notes for Referees

(for use by pupil - groups)

ST. SIMON'S SECY. SCHOOL

PETER: aged 17 years

Peter's Guidance teacher hardly knows him; he's never been in trouble nor has he ever felt like going to speak to the teacher about his own problems. None of Peter's subject teachers have spoken about him to the Guidance teacher who is quite surprised to hear Peter is interested in mountaineering.

Mr. Wyllie is the secretary ot the mountaineering club of which Peter is a member. Peter, one day on Ben Ledi had told him a little of his anxieties about his parents. Since then they had become friends and Peter trusts him, so he has asked him to be his referee.

PARKSIDE SECY. SCHOOL

JIMMY: aged 17 years
junior storeman Macdougal's garage
left school S3
average ability - could have made more effort.

The Guidance teacher, newly appointed to the school, has difficulty in tracing his records. He manages to establish a picture of Jimmy that he realises could fit hundreds of other pupils. He has to do his best with very little.

Willie Thompson, the chief storeman, knows Jimmy well, having been with him 5 days a week for two years. He knows him as a cheerful, willing lad, hardworking most of the time - but ready to slacken off given a chance. He knows all about Jimmy's enthusiasm for canoeing and outdoor activities - he gets it in detail every Monday morning. He would miss Jimmy about the store for he finds him a likeable lad. So do the customers and the mechanics in the garage.

THE JOHN REID SECY. SCHOOL

MARY: aged 17 years

The Guidance teacher knows Mary very well, having taught her in S2, S3, S4, and now S5. It was she who realised Mary's interest in sailing and outdoor activities and suggested to her father that the sailing courses would be helpful. Mary has since made better progress at school than had been expected.

Mr. Graham, the Minister, knows Mary only slightly but knows her parents well. He plays golf with her father and knows the disappointment Mary has been to him. He is happy to write a reference for Mary because of his friendship with her father.

ST. JOHN'S SECY. SCHOOL.

ALAN: aged 18 years
Under-foreman Morgan's factory
left school in S3
played football for the school in S1 & S2
average ability

The Guidance teacher does not remember Alan's name. Records give little more information than above. He consults other members of staff. So many are new to the school they never knew Alan. A vague picture comes to mind of an average lad who was good at football. Not satisfied, he consults the Head Teacher who after some thought and a little checking remembers Alan and remembers too that in S3 he had been involved with the police and sent to a List D school for 6 months.

Fr. Muldoon, the parish priest, knows Alan and his family well. They are practising Catholics. The father is a labourer, works hard and drinks hard but gives no one but his wife any trouble. There are five other children besides Alan who is the oldest. When Alan was caught with others house-breaking in a nearby residential suburb Fr. Muldoon spoke up for him in the court. He was quite convinced that Alan had not been aware of the true nature of the escapade. It was alleged that he, together with another boy, had been keeping guard in the garden of the house. He doesn't see very much of Alan now that Alan no longer plays in the Boys' Guild Football team.

(D) Personal Profile of Applicants

PETER GRAHAM

I am 17 years of age with 5 'O' grades in English, Arithmetic, Maths, Geography and Art. I am in my 5th year at school and supposed to be sitting Higher English, Higher Geography, Higher Art and Higher Maths.

I don't seem to be making much progress in English and Maths. In fact I suppose it's all my own fault. I just don't seem to be able to settle down to my work. There's not much peace in our house. There are always rows between my parents. My father is threatening to leave home. My mother is always crying. I've applied for this job because I like hill-walking. I find peace and time to think in the hills. I'm in a mountaineering club and enjoy the challenge of the mountains. There, too, you begin to grasp the meaning of life. I'd like to share these experiences with other youngsters.

JIMMY SMITH

I work as a store boy in MacDougal's garage. I've been there for two years since I left school at 15. I like the work allright - I check the stock and help to give out the spares. Sometimes I have to run messages all over the garage. I like it when I'm sent with a part to another garage at the end of the town. Then I take as long as I can and enjoy the freedom of being away from the store. Willie, the chief storeman, and myself get on fine. He says I'll have his job one day and then I'll not be so cheerful. But this job at Craigend Outdoor Centre seems just what I'd like to do. I've my own canoe and at the week-ends, go canoeing with my pal. I've done some hill-walking and orienteering too. I mightn't be too keen on living at the Centre; I like to go places at night. Still I'll try for it. Who will I give as a referee?

ALAN McNEILL

I left school when I was 15 and went to work in Morgan's factory - this factory is well known and makes sewing machines. I'm now 18 years old and have been put in charge of my section. I like the work and the people I work with. I'm on the entertainments committee and started a sailing club in the factory. This has been a great success and has received support from the management. It makes working much easier if you and your mates have something enjoyable to look forward to at the week-end. I'm also a youth club leader and have a certificate of proficiency in hill-walking. Not that I'm an expert; this only means I know about safety regulations and what equipment to have for hill-walking. Although I'm happy enough at Morgan's I like outdoor life and would like to work in an Outdoor Centre. If they knew about my six months at Longdown School I'd never get it. Who will I ask for a reference? Really, I should ask Mr. White from Longdown who taught me all I know about sailing and a lot of other things as well. Maybe I'd better stick to Fr. Muldoon. His reference won't give the show away, I'm sure of that. But will the school reference? Let's hope they have forgotten.

MARY SIMMONS

I am 17 years of age and in my 5th year at school. I'm trying Higher English and Higher History and 'O' Grade Maths and French. I like school - at least I like going to school and being with my friends, but I do not like being in class. I feel trapped and don't feel like working. My results are not very good. This is disappointing for my parents - my father is a headmaster and my older brother and sister are at the university. I went once to Craigend Outdoor Centre with one of the guidance teachers and I realised when I was there that this was exactly the kind of work I wanted to do. I felt free there. My father sent me to some of their week-end sailing courses and I loved every minute of them. When I saw this advert, I knew it was the job for me. I'm a member of the orienteering club in school and then I was on that sailing course. I think I have a good chance of getting this job for I know they have no women instructors.

(E) Personal Profiles of Interviewing Panels

INTERVIEWING PANEL

Mr. A.P. Brown, Warden. Married, no children. Beginning to get tired of the Outdoor Centre. Is hoping for some kind of promotion himself. Prides himself on his impartiality and sense of justice. Knows nothing of the four applicants.

Mr. G. Smith, Assistant Warden. Unmarried. Very keen on sailing and canoeing, energetic and extroverted. Knows nothing of the four applicants.

Mr. F. Paxton. Member of Education Committee. Very interested in the Centre. Hopes to extend Centre and develop its potential. Sees the Centre as helpful for deprived or difficult children. He knows Peter's father very well having been in the same class all the way through school, their two families being close neighbours.

AREAS FOR DISCUSSION ARISING FROM THE SIMULATION

1. Methods of finding a job.
   Study and assessment of adverts in new papers. (What is left out? What is implied?)

2. Writing business letters. Applying for an application form.

3. Filling in an application form.

4. Self-assessment.
   Matching self-image to job-image.
   Importance of job satisfaction, self-fulfilment, realisation of job expectations.

5. Appreciation of need for non-academic interests and other extra-school accomplishments.

6. Appreciation of records kept by school.
   Importance of school assessments,
   Wise choice of referees.
   Etiquette of giving names of referees.
   Other people's assessments.

7. Emotional and moral problems arising from the simulation.

8. Interviewing techniques; how to perform well; what to expect.

9. The choices before the interviewing panel.

10. How decisions are reached.

Presentation

1. Distribute to pupils copies of the ADVERTISEMENT. (A)

2. Pupils now write a letter requesting an APPLICATION FORM. (B)

3. All fill in the APPLICATION FORM -
   But four pupils are chosen to be PETER, JIMMY, ALAN and MARY. These four fill in the forms according to the details supplied in their PERSONAL PROFILE sheets. (D) The remainder of the pupils do not, as yet, know these details.

4. The group is now split up into four Reference Panels.
   Each panel will be responsible for the requsite References for one of the four candidates. Four example, the panel dealing with Peter compose references from his Guidance Teacher and Mr. Wyllie.

   The appropriate information, NOTES FOR REFEREES (C) is distributed and each pupil makes use of this information to compose references.

   When this has been done each Panel should, after discussion, deliberation, and possibly revision, submit the best references for the use of the Interview Board. Alternatively, at the discretion of the teacher and depending on the classroom situation, a group might produce composite references, with one member acting as scribe. There can now be class discussion of the references submitted.

5. The four applicants read to the class their PERSONAL PROFILES.(D)

   Discussion should follow each reading.

6. The whole process of the INTERVIEW is discussed to prepare the applicants for the "ordeal" ahead.

7. AN INTERVIEWING BOARD (E) is assembled. This should be composed of three members of staff. Each member receives and reads out the PERSONAL PROFILE allocated. One will be Mr. A.P. Brown, the Warden; the second Mr. G. Smith, Assistant Warden; and the third Mr. F. Paxton, the member of the Education Committee. Discussion of the character of each member of the Board should follow each of these introductory readings.

8. THE INTERVIEWS now take place.

   As each applicant retires there can be discussion of the interview.

9. The Interviewing Board, acting in character, discuss the four applicants and come to a decision.

10. Finally the members of the Board will answer any questions put to them by the class.

    Comments may also be obtained from the four applicants.

    To wind up, there should be some general discussion about the considerations that enter into decision-making and choices.

SOME GROUP REACTIONS

The simulation starts off in a low key. Pupils begin to feel involved at the stage of writing the references. They begin to ask:-
Who is the best person to be a referee?
What kind of things do teachers remember about you?
Do schools keep records about us after we leave school?
Who sees these records?
How do teachers assess pupils?
How honest are references?
Should a school tell about trouble with the police?

There can be a good discussion on assessments of oneself; of a friend; of parents; of teachers.

The "Personal Profiles" of the four applicants bring forth great sympathy for Peter with his family problems, concern for Alan and his problem, criticism of his choice of referee, and appreciation of Jimmy's carefree way of life. Mary is usually the favourite choice for the job.

For most groups it is much easier to talk about Peter's problems than their own personal but similar problems. For others it is easier to identify with Alan's dilemma.
All groups seem to enjoy this section of the simulation. There is a high degree of participation and involvement.

By the day of the interview, excitement is running high.

The four applicants are nervous and anxious to do well. The choice of candidate can vary with each different group and each different panel.

An interesting and quite unexpected new topic of discussion was introduced once when the interviewing board rejected Mary.
"We will train her and then she'll leave and get married," they said.
This prolonged the simulation until 'Women's Lib.' had had their say.

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SOME EXAMPLES.....

To whom it may concern

Alan comes from a respectable family and is a good reliable lad who attends mass regularly with his family. I would recommend him for this job.

To whom it may concern

Peter has never been in trouble, nor has he ever caused the staff any trouble. He was always very punctual and a good worker. I would recommend him for any job as he has a good head for responsibilities and he would be a very trustworthy person.

Guidance Teacher.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Alan at school showed interest in Sports and played for the school team. He left school in third year and is eighteen now. Before Alan left school he got into slight difficulties with the police and was sent to an approved school for six months. Since this trivial incident Alan has improved greatly and shows he is capable of working hard

Guidance Teacher

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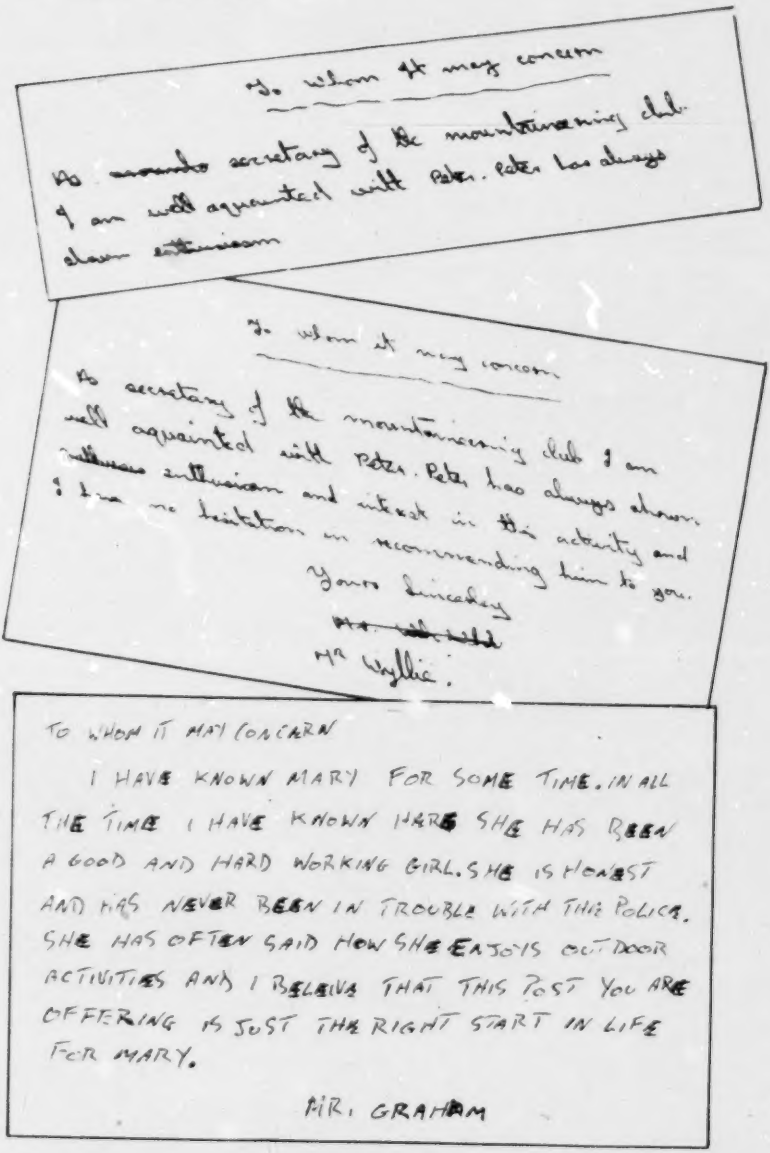

To whom it may concern

As secretary of the mountaineering club I am well aquainted with Peter. Peter has always shown enthusiasm and interest in this activity and I have no hesitation in recommending him to you.

Yours sincerely

Mr Wyllie.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I HAVE KNOWN MARY FOR SOME TIME. IN ALL THE TIME I HAVE KNOWN HER SHE HAS BEEN A GOOD AND HARD WORKING GIRL. SHE IS HONEST AND HAS NEVER BEEN IN TROUBLE WITH THE POLICE. SHE HAS OFTEN SAID HOW SHE ENJOYS OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES AND I BELIEVE THAT THIS POST YOU ARE OFFERING IS JUST THE RIGHT START IN LIFE FOR MARY.

MR. GRAHAM

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

I HAVE NOW KNOWN MARY FOR FOUR YEARS. I BELIEVE. THAT THIS COURSE IN OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES WOULD BE IDEALLY SUITABLE FOR HER, AS SHE HAS A KEEN INTREST IN [illegible] ACTIVITIES. RECENTLY HER SCHOOL WORK HAS IMPROVED IMMENSELY. SHE IS A GIRL OF QUIET NATURE, AND IS ALWAYS KNOWN TO BE PUNCTUAL.

To whom it may Concern.

As a pupil she had a good attendence record and was reasonably punctual. She was a steady worker and never showed any improvement or deterioration. She was a boy who made friends easily owing to his cheerful nature, and was always found to be a very honest pupil.

To whom it may concern

As an employee of Macdougal's garage Jimmy showed ingenuity in his ideas. He is has a pleasant personality and is willing to work hard most of the time. His enthusiasm for outdoor activities has involved him in many clubs our Youth clubs and organizations in which he has proved himself very successful. The only failing that I have ever noticed Jimmy to have is his inclination to slacken off his work when he thinks that no one is watching him.

Yours sincerely,
Mr. W. Thompson.